



Azores Archipelago: Visit the island of São Miguel

By Eduardo Lima
65th ABW Public Affairs

The island of São Miguel is the largest of the Azorean archipelago with approximately 291 square miles and a population of about 120,000 people, nearly half of the Azorean population. It also has the biggest economic impact due to its several industries, including tobacco, beer brewing, sugar and tea production and pineapple plantations, etc. The island's primary occupations are farming, fishing, industry and services.

The island's settlement started around 1444 with the arrival of settlers from the mainland provinces of Estremadura, Upper Alentejo and Algarve. The first inhabitants were later joined by others from the island of Madeira and possibly France. The fertile soil and the island's geographic position at the crossroads of Europe, Africa and the Americas contributed to rapid economic growth based on the production of wheat, sugar cane, wine and dairy products. By the end of the 18th century, the export of oranges to England also brought a period of great prosperity to the island.

São Miguel was occupied by the Spanish in 1582 after the defeat of a French fleet off the coast of Vila Franca do Campo which had Portuguese soldiers on board in support of Dom Antonio Prior do Crato's claims to the Portuguese throne.

The island is politically divided into six municipalities: the districts of Ponta Delgada, Lagoa, Vila Franca do Campo, Povoação, Ribeira Grande and Nordeste. The island's capital is Ponta Delgada, the largest and most populated city of the Azores. A charming and cosmopolitan city, it features some beautiful churches, monuments, palaces, a museum, modern hotels and the islands' only shopping mall. The city is also the headquarters of the Regional Government of the Azores and the University of the Azores.

Ponta Delgada hosts the Azores' most important religious fest, called "Festas do Senhor Santo Cristo" (festivities of Lord Holy Christ), which is held every year on the fifth Sunday after Easter. This religious tradition goes back to the end of the 17th century with the fame of the miracles



Sete Cidades, a large crater with a 7.5-mile perimeter, and its green and blue lakes surrounded by steep slopes covered with trees and flowers is one of São Miguel's main attractions. São Miguel is the largest island of the nine in the Azorean archipelago. (Courtesy photo)

obtained through the grace of the Lord Holy Christ, whose statue is venerated in the Convent of Senhora da Esperança. The religious procession, which includes thousands of pilgrims and the faithful who follow the image of the Holy Christ, even today is routed through the same city streets and lasts for about four hours.

One of São Miguel's main attractions is undoubtedly the beauty of its landscape. The Caldeira das Sete Cidades, a large crater with a 7.5-mile perimeter, its green and blue lakes surrounded by steep slopes covered with trees and flowers, is a good example of beauty at its best.

The Valley of Furnas, a true paradise at the bottom of a vast crater where springs flow free, is another natural wonder of this island. In this valley are a fascinating park, thermal springs and sulfur pits with boiling mud and water. Next to the valley is the calm, romance-inspiring Lake of Furnas. Sought by the natives of São Miguel as well as tourists on weekends, it's a great place to have picnics and to experience a relaxing environment. This is the area where the famous local dish called "Cozido das Furnas" (a stew made of mixed meats and vegetables) is cooked by burying hermetically closed pots containing the food in the hot soil.

The Lagoa do Fogo (lake of fire), Pico do Carvão and Tronqueira, are just some of the other natural scenery sites I recommend you to visit. The villages of Ribeira Quente (which was hit by a mudslide in October 1997, killing 29 people), Porto

Formoso, Vila Franca do Campo, Ribeira Grande, Povoação, Capelas, Mosteiros and the district of Nordeste are places worth visiting. Nordeste is one of the most attractive districts of the island due to its luxuriant vegetation and neatness.

Like most of the other islands, the climate is mild. Ocean lovers will find beautiful blue waters where they can swim, sail, fish or snorkel.

An international airport and seaport serve São Miguel. The regional airline, SATA-Air Azores, offers several daily flights from Terceira to the island for approximately 174 Euros, but sometimes the local travel agencies offer special and cheaper packages.

The ferry boats travel between this and the other islands May through end of September. The cost between Terceira and Ponta Delgada is approximately 109.00 Euros. Like other Azorean islands, you may find a language barrier, but not as much as a smaller island, since you will be able to find more English-speaking people.

Take advantage of these travel opportunities and visit one of the most beautiful islands in the Azores.



UCI Countdown
93

*Days remaining
until Lajes Field's
Unit Compliance
Inspection*



Sponsorship Make PCS season memorable

By Chief Master Sgt. Richard Lee
65th Mission Support Group

An expression that I've heard throughout my career is, "First impressions are lasting impressions." After 22 years in the Air Force and having seen countless first impressions, I certainly agree with this saying.

Having said that, I must admit that my family and I were absolutely blown away with our first impression of Team Lajes.

There are many things I think we do extremely well at Lajes, but one of our biggest strengths is saying "hello" and

"goodbye" to our team members. We truly are one big family on the island, and my family and I felt like we were part of something special from the beginning.

How many times have you changed duty assignments to find the sponsorship program lacked the attention to detail to make your transition to your new duty station a smooth one? Hopefully the answer was never, but experience tells me that's probably not the case.

Having had the opportunity to PCS seven times during my career, there have been both good and bad moves. My favorite story includes having the "where's my sponsor look" at the airport. I found out later my sponsor had already PCS'd before my arrival! Not a good first impression. Fortunately for all of us, Lajes Field has one of the best; if not the best sponsorship program I have ever seen.

During my time on the island I've seen our sponsorship program in action and would like to share some of the special things that we do to welcome our new personnel. This list isn't all-inclusive, but highlights some of my favorite aspects. Here at Lajes, we pay attention to the details and go above and beyond when it comes to welcoming our new personnel to the island. The turnout of unit leadership and co-workers to help welcome you to the island is something my family and I have not forgotten. Preparing lodging or dorm rooms stocked with food and drinks is also a welcomed site for the weary traveler. Also, a welcome basket of treats, unit or base contact information and welcome

letters placed in the rooms are a nice touch. Additionally, we get our spouses and family members involved in showing the new personnel around the community and base which help build friendships and ease their transition. Even our children get involved with the DoDDS peer mentoring program and showing new kids around school. These

small touches help make the difference between a good sponsor program and one that lives up to Lajes standards.

Supervisor's lead the way when it comes to a successful sponsorship program.

CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley wrote in his September 2007, Enlisted Perspective, "...supervisors must be involved from the start," when it comes to sponsorship of new Airmen and "no one should be more concerned with success of Airmen more than the supervisor." Having the frontline supervisor as the sponsor is a great way for them to show concern for their new Airmen, begin building professional relationships and is essential for developing our Airmen to set them up for success not only while at Lajes but also in the future.

This summer a large number of our team members will PCS prior to the upcoming Unit Compliance Inspection, so it's imperative we do our best to make sure all our programs are truly "Outstanding" prior to our departure. No one wants to walk into a new job just prior to a major inspection and find it not meeting standards ... I know I don't. Since the beginning of our preparation for this inspection we have had one goal in mind: earn an "Outstanding" rating. An "Outstanding" rating will validate all the hard work we have done to prepare for this inspection.

The turnover in personnel this upcoming PCS season will certainly put our sponsor program to the test, but like every task this team takes on it will excel. Supervisors, continue the focus on UCI preparation and stay actively involved in transitioning your new Airmen to Lajes. Let's show them why we are the best kept secret in USAFE!

"Preparing lodging or dorm rooms stocked with food and drinks is also a welcomed site for the weary traveler."

—Chief Lee

535-4240

actionline@lajes.af.mil

The Commander's Line is your link to me for suggestions, kudos and as a way to work problems or issues within the 65th Air Base Wing for which you can't find another solution. Your chain of command should always be your first option for praise or problems — but when that's not the answer, call or e-mail the Commander's Line at 535-4240 or actionline@lajes.af.mil.



Col. JL Briggs

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Commander, 65th Air Base Wing



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Good to Know

OHA Utility Survey

The Overseas Housing Allowance Survey, available at <https://www.perdiem.osd.mil/oha/survey/mayoha.html>, ends Jun. 16. This survey is an opportunity for people who live off base and receive OHA. A similar survey for Cost of Living Allowance was conducted last year and COLA for this location has increased.

New PCS Family Forum

A new forum-type website, sponsorslast4.com, allows any military spouse from any military branch to input and find information about different bases. This website aspires to be a source of first-hand recommendations for other spouses to quickly gain information and give advice about doctors, schools, jobs, restaurants, and many other things about their new areas. The forum also contains blogs from the website creators about their experiences as military spouses.

Housing PCS advice

The Housing Office would like to prepare PCSers as well as possible for a smooth transition. As soon as members know when they are leaving, they should go to the Housing Office and set a pre-inspection. Orders are not needed to make appointments. Once an individual has PCS orders and a firm port-call date, they may set the final inspection. At the final inspection, residents will need to make sure the unit is ready to turn back to the landlord and that they are prepared to finalize all the utility bills. Be sure to have some Euro on hand. If there is reason to be concerned about utility bills, waiting until the day of the final inspection is not the way to handle this situation. Contact the Housing Office at 535-3507 for more information.

Books for Botswana

The 65th Contracting Squadron is hosting a book drive in an effort to collect books and supplies for a day care center in Botswana. To donate, drop off children's books, construction paper, crayons, misc. art/school supplies at the drop-off donations boxes at the commissary, BX, Post Office, shopette, and CDC between June 10 and 25. For details, call 535-1469.

America supports military with travel specials

By Tech. Sgt. Christin Michaud
65th ABW Public Affairs

As summer approaches, school gets out, and PCS season begins, military personnel from all over the world will be traveling. One of the benefits of serving in the military are some special offers designed for military personnel and their families.

Armed Forces Vacation Club

The Armed Forces Vacation Club is a program for Department of Defense employees which offer vacations at timeshare resorts worldwide at a discounted rate. Space-available vacation weeks are available for only \$329 for 7 day, 6 night vacations. The size of the unit can range from a hotel unit to a 2 or 3 bedroom unit depending on the date and location. To check for availability, visit www.afvclub.com or call 1-800-724-9988. Although these vacation weeks are at timeshare resorts, guests are not required to attend timeshare sale presentations. When looking for a vacation week, search options range from distance from a certain location to regions or even countries. The search option allows someone looking to enter a specific date, month or even 10-week range. One advantage of the program is the option to give Resort Vacation Certificates to family and friends. Military personnel can purchase vacation weeks in advance at \$329 and give them as a gift. More details are available at the Web site.

Disney Specials

Anyone who knows me or who has been to my office knows I am a fan of Disney. Military members can stay on Walt Disney World property at the Shades of Green, a resort just for servicemembers. Room rates are based on grade. Additionally, discounted theme park tickets for Disney Theme Parks and other area attractions are available for purchase at the Shades of Green even if you don't stay there. For more information, including ticket prices, visit www.shadesofgreen.org.

Disney also offers discounts in off-peak periods on their Disney Cruise Line, with cruises to Eastern or Western Caribbean, Mexico and the Bahamas. Each cruise features a stop at Disney's private island Castaway Cay. There are meet and greet opportunities with characters throughout the ship. "My family and I hadn't taken a real family vacation (visiting family doesn't count) in nearly, well ... ever. The Disney Cruise was fantastic, 7 days of the Western Caribbean with 3 island stops, Wow! We regret not taking one earlier," said Senior Master Sgt. Antonio Rita.

Anheuser-Busch Parks

Anheuser-Bush is offering its "Here's to the Heroes" program for the fourth year in a row. The program offers free tickets to its theme parks for servicemembers and up to three family members as a way to say thank you for their service.

"It's important to us for all the reasons you can probably predict," said Fred Jacobs, vice president of communications for Anheuser-Busch. "[This] is a great way for them to reconnect, particularly if they've been separated." All servicemembers need to do is register online at www.herosalute.com, print and sign the form and bring it with them. If the form can't be printed, it can be filled out upon arrival at the park. Every person over 10 participating in this program must present valid active-duty military or service identification.

Each pass is valid for a one-day admission per person per year to five of Anheuser-Busch's seven theme park brands. Visitors may choose Sea World Orlando, San Diego or San Antonio; Busch Gardens Tampa Bay or Williamsburg; Pennsylvania's Sesame Place; Florida's Adventure Island; or Virginia's Water Country USA. Discovery Cove and Aquatica parks are not included in this offer.

Last summer, I met up with my father in Orlando and we took my 3-year-old son to Sea World. It was a nice bonus to get in free. In addition to that, was a special moment I'll never forget. When we walked up to the turn-style and handed the attendant our tickets, he looked at us and said, "Who's the Hero?" At that moment, I felt an overwhelming sense of pride in being a servicemember and could see by the look on my father's face, that he was proud of me as well.

Anheuser-Bush is a corporate supporter of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and corporations with servicemembers and their families serving at home and abroad.

These are just a few of the travel opportunities for personnel, but the support doesn't stop there. There are military resorts similar to Shades of Green in other vacation spots. One is Hale Koa in Hawaii and another is Edelweiss in Germany.

To learn about other special offers for military personnel and their families, visit Air Force Crossroads at <http://www.afcrossroads.com/>.

America supports your service.

(Some information courtesy of Air Force News Service)



Today	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
10 a.m. Thrift Store Open 4 p.m. Wing Rec. Ceremony 5 p.m. High School Graduation, Praia Auditorium 6 p.m. Prime Rib special or Build Your Own Pasta Buffet, TORC 7 p.m. Prom Night (PG-13) 7:30 p.m. Cosmic Bowling 10 p.m. Street Kings (R)	10 a.m. Thrift Store open 10 a.m. Last day to shop at the commissary until Wednesday 2:30 p.m. \$.25/ game, bowling alley 7 p.m. Member's Only Texas Hold 'Em, TORC 7 p.m. Prom Night (PG-13) 7:30 p.m. Cosmic Bowling 10 p.m. The Runs (R)	9 a.m. Evangelical Service 9 a.m. Sightseeing Boat Trip to Split Rock, Outdoor Rec 9 a.m. CCD Mass 10:30 a.m. Noon Praise Service 2 p.m. Prom Night (PG-13) 2:30 p.m. \$.25/ game, bowling alley 7 p.m. Street Kings (R)	6 a.m. Oceanview open for breakfast - start earning your Extreme Summer points 10 a.m. Thrift Store open 10 a.m. Library open 1 p.m. Call 535-HAWC to schedule a MicroFit. 5:20 p.m. Body Sculpting, fitness center 6 p.m. Spin Class, cycle room	Portuguese Holiday AAFES, commissary, community center, housing and library closed 10 a.m. EDIS Playgroup, LYP 5:20 p.m. Step Class, fitness center 5:30 p.m. Mongolian BBQ, TORC 6 p.m. Spin class, fitness center cycle room	11 a.m. Bowl w/ your Boss special 5 p.m. Family Night, bowling alley 5:30 p.m. Hands on Picture Framing, Arts & Crafts 6 p.m. Open Play Volleyball 6:30 p.m. \$.35 Wings, TORC 6:30 p.m. Mega BINGO card sales, TORC. Game starts at 7:15 p.m.	8 a.m. Finance office closed until noon for training 9 a.m. Inter-viewing Skills Workshop, A&FRC Noon Swimming Pool opens 5:30 p.m. Hands-on Picture Framing, Arts & Crafts 7 p.m. The Runs (R) 9 p.m. Chili Dog & Karaoke, TORC

Community Events

Bullfights: 6:30 p.m. Saturday: Largo São João, Lajes. 6 p.m. Sunday: Largo São João, Lajes.

Arts & Crafts 535-3909

Cake Decorating Class: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. June 18 and 19. \$25.

Intermediate Beading Class: June 17 and 19. Cost is \$36, two-hour class. If you took the beginner's class you will have all the tools, bring them with you. Tuesday classes start at 5:30 p.m. Thursday classes start at noon.

Advanced Beading Class: June 24 and 26. \$36, two-hour class. All materials provided. Minimum age is 14. Deadline to sign up is three days prior. Tuesday classes start at 5:30 p.m. Thursday classes start at noon. Sign up at the Arts & Crafts Center, Bldg. T-319.

Metal Embossing Class: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. June 25 and 26. \$25.

Swimming Pool 535-3363

The base swimming pool is scheduled to open Thursday. Pool passes will also be available for purchase on that day. Daily fees are \$2.50 for children and \$3.75 for adults. Season passes are \$50 per person, \$70 for a couple, and \$100 for a family of five. Cost is \$5 for each additional child. Hours will be noon to 7 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Pool Parties are available for \$75 and hour with the slide or \$60 an hour without. Swimming lessons will also be available for \$45 for the first child and \$25 for each additional child. Children under 10 must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. Children 11-13 may be unattended if they can demonstrate the ability to swim 12 meters. Children who are not toilet trained may not use the main pool.

Lajes Park Lanes

Bowling Passes: Purchase a pass for unlimited bowling valid through Aug. 31 for \$45. Free bowling ball with pass purchase. Shoes not included. Not to be used in conjunction with leagues, tournaments, cosmic bowling, or parties.

Wednesday Lunch/Bowling Special: Show a Lajes Park receipt for lunch valued at \$4 or more and bowl two games free between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. the same day. Children under 12 get 2 games free with the purchase of a kid's meal. Shoes not included.

Fitness Center 535-6126

Massages: Stone or Wrap, Relaxation, Pregnancy, Specialty and Chair massage. Sessions 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

Friday the 13th 5K: 7:15 a.m. June 13 at the Chace Fitness Center. Open to everyone.

Kids vs. Parents Kickball: 10 a.m. June 28 at the SFS Softball Field. Open to everyone; can sign up as team or individuals, and do not have to have children to play.

Education

Veterans' Scholarship: Fund for veterans' education announces new round of scholarships for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan awarding up to \$3.5 million in 2008-09 in undergraduate scholarships. Applications are available now for the fall 2008 term. The next deadline is June 15. The awards, which may be renewed for the following academic year, are intended to cover financial need not met with need based grants and military education benefits. For more information and application, visit <http://www.veteransfund.org>.

HAWC 535-3889

Fitness Library: The HAWC has up-to-date fitness DVD's for check out.

MicroFit Assessment: Find out how fit you really are. The HAWC offers a full MicroFit assessment for active-duty, dependents and local nationals. Call 535-HAWC and set up an appointment.

Post Office

Postal Hours Change: Starting today the parcel pick-up window and finance window will be closed Fridays. Customers will still have access to their boxes.

Community Center

Colossal Cookie Challenge: 11 a.m. June 28 in the community center. Categories include, special occasion or holiday, no bake, healthy and cookie maker's special (all others). Deadline to register is June 20. Call 535-5216 for details.

New Hours: The community center hours are now from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

Classified Ads

E-mail classified ads to news@lajes.af.mil by 5 p.m. the Thursday prior to the week you need it published. Notify the Crossroads when items have been sold. Lajes personnel may also post ads at Lajesads.com. This site is not affiliated with the Crossroads.

For Sale: 7'6" Epoxy/Tri-Fin Surfboard with board bag. Excellent Condition \$280. Call Brian 535-6137 or 295-549-499.

Wanted: Donations needed! PCSing? Spring Cleaning? Please donate your unwanted items, such as clothes, household items, toys, books, etc. The High School uses your donations to raise money for traveling sports teams. Show your support and donate! We will pick up your donations! Email Lajes15@yahoo.com or call 295-549-206 Thank you!